

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-04 PRS-01 SAJ-01

SAM-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00 NSC-05 /086 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2198

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINC EUR VAHINGEN

USNMR SHAPE

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

S E C R E T BONN 16456

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MBFR GW

SUBJECT: MBFR: ROTH COMMENTS ON FRENCH PROBLEM

REFS: (A) LONDON 15175 DTG 240853Z SEP 76;

(B) USNATO 5269 DTG 281825Z SEP 76

1. IN A MEETING WITH DISARMAMENT COMMISSIONER ROTH ON SEPTEMBER 28 TO SEEK HIS VIEWS ON THE CHANCELLOR'S PROSPECTIVE MBFR INITIATIVE (SEPTTEL), WE ASKED HIM WHETHER THE CHANCELLOR MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER AN EARLY HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH TO GISCARD ON THE FRENCH PROBLEM. ROTH RESPONDED THAT SUCH AN APPROACH -- ALTHOUGH POSSIBLE -- WAS UNLIKELY BEFORE SPRING. HE SAID HE HAD PROVIDED THE REASONING FOR THE GERMAN POSITION AT THE TRILATERAL (REF A). ROTH THEN INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WOULD BE A FRANCO-GERMAN SUMMIT IN JANUARY AT SECRET

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WHICH TIME THE SUBJECT OF MBFR COULD ARISE, ALTHOUGH

THERE WERE NO SPECIFIC PLANS NOW TO PLACE THE TOPIC ON THE AGENDA.

2. IN COMMENTING ON THE FRENCH PROBLEM, ROTH MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE GERMANS WOULD BE WILLING TO RISK FRICTION WITH THE FRENCH ON THE COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING ISSUE. ENSURING THAT THE FRENCH UNDERSTOOD THAT THEIR FORCES IN THE NGA WOULD BE COVERED BY THE OPERATION OF THE COMMON CEILING WAS A "SINE QUA NON" OF THE FRG POSITION. WHILE THE GERMANS WERE READY TO MAKE THEIR POINT ON THE COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING QUITE CLEAR TO THE FRENCH, ROTH SAID IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT WASHINGTON MIGHT NOT WANT TO PUSH THE FRENCH ON THIS ISSUE.

3. COMMENT: ON THE QUESTION OF AN EARLY HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH TO GISCARD, IT APPEARS THAT ROTH HAS SOFTENED THE FRG POSITION SOMEWHAT BY AGREEING THAT THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF SUCH AN APPROACH BEFORE SPRING, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT KNOW WHETHER ROTH ALSO MENTIONED THIS IN LONDON. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF SCHMIDT'S RECENT PUBLIC COMMENTS ON MBFR, WE BELIEVE THE CHANCELLOR MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE TO THE IDEA OF RAISING THE MATTER WITH GISCARD AT AN EARLY DATE FOLLOWING THE BUNDESTAG ELECTIONS IF THE MATTER WERE BROUGHT TO HIS ATTENTION BY HIS STAFF. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN WHETHER A PARALLEL HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH BY THE U.S. AND UK WOULD ALSO BE REQUIRED, AS STATED BY RUTH (REF B), BUT WE BELIEVE WASHINGTON SHOULD BE PREPARED TO RESPOND TO SUCH A REQUEST FROM THE FRG SHOULD THE GERMANS DECIDE TO MOVE.

4. ROTH LEFT US WITH THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION THAT THE FRG WILL NOT BE MOVED FROM ITS POSITION THAT THE FRENCH MUST BE TOLD IN WRITING THAT THE ALLIES WILL NOT ABANDON THE COMMON COLLECTIVE CEILING. ACCORDINGLY, WE AGREE WITH THE COMMENT CONTAINED PARA 11, REF B THAT MODIFICATION OF THE FRG PAPER RATHER THAN OPPOSITION TO IT WOULD BE THE PREFERRED COURSE OF ACTION.
HILLENBRAND

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